

Hoch-transcript

HM 9/16/74

Lesar phoned after returning from a weekend away last night. His purpose was to learn how I had made out and update me on Friday's developments, Ray case and other. His mail had not come when he had left to meet with me at the airport Friday.

(Ray case developments good. The judge is the respondent in the state's mandamus case. His response was short and good.)

It turned out that Lesar was home before the train bearing Hoch and his wife on their honeymoon arrived. Jim picked them up at Union Station.

We had figured that Paul would phone him not that he would have or take time for a visit before catching the bus to Paul's parents' home in Shepherdstown, WVa. I had written a strong letter and gave it to JL and had told him to make it clear to PH that if he did breach trust on this to expect in return whatever I might find it possible to do, that at some point all this crookedness and self-seeking had to stop. I expected at the least a call or a letter to each of the four publications to which he had made submissions withdrawing the submission and asking that no use be made of the leads it supplied.

Reluctantly, probably more because it was before his wife, Hoch wrote three letters that Lesar recalls. Of this he mentioned I recall New Republic and New Times. Lesar remembered no letter to The Nation, and I forget the fourth. He said he'd check with Hoch on The Nation.

Paul's justification is that a) he is a "critic" equal to or as he seems to feel superior to me; and he doesn't like the way I write.

Or, as I'd anticipated, an ego problem. It is not all I'd anticipated nor need it be all in this case.

There is, of course, legitimate basis for criticizing my writing.

And Paul's research has been very good.

But neither is a license to steal.

Or to do what in this instance could be worse, ruin the possibilities of subsidiary rights.

It would be good to know that none of these publications will now go off on its own. I have nothing to stop any one.

Or, the danger is not over.

I look back over these long years and can't help wondering how much more I could have done if I had not had to spend so much time trying to prevent others from doing what could hurt us all (often failing). I spent more time keeping Paul from doing anything with a stupid and seriously counter-productive phoney study with melons that a careful editing job on a book would have required. Enough time to draft another planned book. More time with the irrational Nichols and his counter-productive and ill-conceived suit. The Wacht flap took great amounts of time but the effort did not prevent his being used to exculpate the FBI from charges of suppression of evidence and pinning it on the Kennedy family. I did prevent worse that Garrison did do. Ullin, Sprague, Skolnick, so many, so very much time! What could have been done with that enormous amount of time!

With Paul our relationship was based upon his assurance that he would do no writing of his own. So, as I sent him copies of everything, for a long time using him as a duplicate depository.

After I started filing suits he decided he would. Only he has to duplicate mine, not go off on his own endeavors.

Then he decided to write and, naturally, picked a subject on which I had already sent him five or six chapters of a book I'd begun. (He has plenty of time so he has completed his competitive book, same subject.) Meanwhile, on his assurance that he would not write, I also kept him informed of my (quite successful) personal investigations so he could use them as a basis for further exploration of the suppressed files.

The new morality.